UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1991/113
5 July 1991

Original: ENGLISH

Second regular session of 1991
Geneva, 3-26 July 1991
Agenda item 16

DISASTER REDUCTION AND RELIEF

Fight against the screw-worm infestation

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the Economic and Social Council the note by the International Fund for Agricultural Development on the screw-worm infestation and efforts undertaken to eradicate it. The note provides additional information on the background and origin of the fight against the screw-worm infestation and its latest status in order to complement the information provided in the report of the Food and Agriculture Organization (E/1991/62, annex).

GE.91-70820/6561a

Annex

NOTE BY THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE COLLABORATIVE FIGHT AGAINST THE SCREW-WORM

1. The New World screw-worm, a particularly destructive livestock insect pest in the Americas, was first reported in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in late 1988. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), recognizing the danger, had participated in a joint mission to the Libyan Arab Jamarihiya in May 1991, which was instrumental in confirming the presence of the screw-worm in the country. IFAD responded to the emergency by initiating and designing a regional pilot biological control programme for the eradication of the screw-worm, employing the only known method of eradication, developed by the United States of America and Mexico, the sterile insect technique, which relies on the regular aerial release of sterilized flies. This is supported by complementary measures for animal inspection, spraying of herds/flocks and control of animal movement.

2. IFAD financed more than half the cost of the pilot programme and mobilized additional funds from the African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for this initiative. IFAD then requested the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to execute this Fund-initiated pilot programme. FAO provided technical assistance staff through a technical cooperation programme grant for this purpose.

3. The results from the implementation of the pilot programme show that it has been extremely successful. In April 1991, only one isolated case of New World screw-worm has been discovered, as against 289 cases in April 1990, showing that the pilot programme by itself has virtually eradicated the screw-worm in the target area. It is important, however, to monitor the evolving situation and consolidate the achievements of the pilot programme.

4. A large-scale control programme was envisaged to follow the IFAD-initiated pilot programme. The large-scale programme was jointly initiated by FAO and IFAD, with an initial estimated total cost of $US 117 million. A memorandum of understanding was signed between FAO and IFAD in June 1990 setting out the role of IFAD in resource mobilization and the responsibility of FAO for execution. Subsequently, international donor pledging conferences were held in July 1990 and in February 1991 at IFAD headquarters in Rome to mobilize funding for the large-scale programme. In the light of the quasi-eradication achieved by the pilot programme itself in the target area, it has been possible to lower the cost of the large-scale control programme to $US 45 million. Multilateral institutions have pledged a total of $US 23.7 million. Of these, the largest contributors are the World Bank Global Environment Facility, with $US 9 million, and IFAD, with $US 5.5 million, while other contributors include the Islamic Development Bank, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and the African Development Bank. Bilateral donors have pledged a total of $US 21.5 million. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya itself has contributed $US 27 million in cash and in kind.

5. In December 1990, the General Assembly, in its resolution 45/207, called urgent attention to the problem of pest control. It urged the international community to give full support to action to eradicate the screw-worm fly, particularly in Africa, and welcomed the support already provided by donors to the collaboration between FAO and IFAD.

6. The biological control programme against the screw-worm demonstrates the potential for collaboration among countries and between different multilateral agencies to face a common threat. In the prevailing context, such an operation would not have been possible without the effective and joint collaboration of IFAD and FAO. The programme is a remarkable example of the mobilization of efforts by all donors to give priority to addressing a global environmental challenge over any other consideration.